The Institute of Cancer Research
University of London

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

PG Cert / PG Dip / MSc in Oncology
(part-time, taught course)

1. Awarding Institution	University of London (MSc) Institute of Cancer Research (PGCert & PGDip)
2. Teaching Institution	Institute of Cancer Research
3. Teaching Site	Chelsea, London
4. Professional Body Accreditation	N/A
5. Final Award(s)	Postgraduate Certificate in Oncology (60 credits) Postgraduate Diploma in Oncology (120 credits) Master of Science in Oncology (180 credits)
6. UCAS Code	N/A
7. QAA Benchmark Statement	N/A
8. FHEQ Level	M
9. Date of Production	December 2005
10. Date of Review	December 2010
11. Normal Length of Programme	PGCert: 1 year of study (part-time) PGDip: 2 years of study (part-time) MSc: 3 years of study (part-time; across 4 academic years)

12. Description and Aims of the Programme:

The programme is a modular taught postgraduate course for specialist postgraduate students in the fields of Clinical and Medical Oncology, all of whom will attend on a day-release basis. The overall aim is to encourage proactive problem solving approaches and a reflective approach to medical or clinical practice, producing graduates who are well equipped with the highly refined intellectual, scientific and clinical skills necessary for leadership careers in twenty-first century Oncology.

The programme is designed and structured for highly specialised, part-time, day-release students, and adopts a modular, credit accumulation model that is precisely attuned to their specific needs. The individual 20, 10 or 5 credit modules are each designed to provide detailed and distinct skills, together with advanced knowledge in a particular aspect of Oncology at 'M' Level. Taken together in defined blocks of 60 and 120 credits, these lead to a coherent part-time programme with possible exit points at Certificate and Diploma level. An additional 60 credit dissertation provides exit at MSc degree level.

The curriculum will also equip students in the field of Clinical Oncology to sit the Part 1 and Part 2 examinations for Fellowship of the Royal College of Radiologists (FRCR). For medical oncologists, this course meets the identified need for a theoretical basis to their structured training and will encompass the knowledge required for the medical oncology 'exit' examinations. The Research Methodology module provides core competences for NIHR Academic Clinical Fellows, as recommended by the Department of Health 2008.

The aims of the programme are:

Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma:

- to provide a thorough theoretical understanding of cancer together with an in-depth and systematic understanding of current cancer treatments and cancer research, consistent with the volume of 'M' Level credits studied;

- to enable the application of theoretical knowledge in the clinical environment, informing working practice and considering work-based experience in an academic context, consistent with the volume of 'M' Level credits studied;

- to expand and develop advanced skills of critical awareness, advanced reasoning, analysis and evaluation, enabling informed judgements to be made on complex scientific and clinical issues, consistent with the volume of 'M' Level credits studied;

- to expand and develop advanced skills in decision-making informed by the interaction between theoretical knowledge and clinical practice, consistent with the volume of 'M' Level credits studied;

- to expand and develop advanced skills in communication for the management and care of cancer patients, consistent with the volume of 'M' Level credits studied; and

- to deliver the relevant curriculum and professional education at postgraduate level to enable students in the field of Clinical Oncology to sit the examinations for Fellowship of the Royal College of Radiologists.

Master of Science:

In addition to all the aims and objectives of the Postgraduate Diploma course:

- to develop and demonstrate advanced skills in research methodologies and techniques through undertaking a research-based dissertation or equivalent in a clinical setting;

- to develop and demonstrate originality in the exploration of the issues and constraints of undertaking research in a clinical setting, thus developing the ability to engage more effectively in future research activity within the student's organisation; and

- to develop and demonstrate the qualities and transferable skills necessary to contribute towards raising standards in the chosen specialty through research.

13: Modules in Programme

YEAR 1
Radiation Sciences for the Clinical and Medical Oncologist **(C)**
Statistics for the Oncologist **(C)**
Cell and Molecular Biology of Cancer **(C)**
Pharmacological Treatment of Cancer **(C)**
Radiation Sciences in Theory and Practice **(O)**
Experimental Cancer Pharmacology **(O)**
YEAR 2
Research Methodology **(C)**
Less Common Cancers **(C)**
Gastro-intestinal & Urological Malignancy **(C)**
Breast & Gynaecological Malignancy **(C)**
Respiratory, Head and Neck and Skin **(C)**
Palliative Care & Late Effects **(C)**
Cancer in Context **(C)**
YEAR 3
Dissertation/Thesis/Peer-reviewed paper (10,000 words) **(Mandatory for MSc)**

C = Mandatory Core Module for all students
O = Optional Module

All modules are of 10 'M' Level Credits except for the following:
Cell and Molecular Biology of Cancer: 20 credits
Palliative Care & Late Effects: 5 credits
Cancer in Context: 5 credits

The dissertation is 60 credits.

Contact hours, Parts A & B

In each of Parts A and B, the course is taught over a period of 36 weeks, with an additional reading week in the winter and in the spring. Each part comprises 216 contact hours and 200 hours of private study.

14: Assessment

A variety of assessment methods are used to test the student's learning including: multiple choice papers, case studies, critical reviews, reflective diaries, critical debates, audits and protocol development discussions.

All forms of assessment are marked numerically out of 100. Examiners use the full range of marks.

The following classification applies to the full MSc:

70–100	Distinction
60–69	Merit
50–59	Pass
0–49	Fail

15: Career Relevance

On graduation, the aims and objectives of the course will have enabled students to develop the specialised theoretical, clinical and medical skills to pursue excellence in the fight against cancer. The course will develop students' own careers by equipping them with a high level understanding of the theory and practice of cancer science, of advanced cancer treatment, and of the science of cancer research – all to the benefit of cancer patients. The course will facilitate students to prepare for the professional oncology examinations. It is felt that one of the attractions of following the course to Diploma and Degree level will be the career advantage given by possessing such a qualification in the highly competitive job market for consultant posts.